

PAYING FOR SEX IN MALES AND FEMALES: A CROSS-SECTIONAL SURVEY IN MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

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Background:

Most research focuses on individuals selling sex but very few on those who pay for sex. This study aimed to determine the proportion of males and females who paid for sex and associated factors among patients attending a sexual health centre.

Methods:

We conducted a short, cross-sectional survey at the Melbourne Sexual Health Centre (MSHC) between March and April 2019 delivered by computer-assisted self-interview. The survey included a question on whether or not participants had paid for sex in the previous three months. The proportion of individuals who had paid for sex was calculated by sex and sexual orientation. Univariable and multivariable logistic regression models were conducted to identify individual factors associated with paying for sex in the previous three months.

Results:

The proportion who reported paying for sex in the previous three months was 12.2% (42/345) in heterosexual males followed by 6.4% (23/357) in gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM) and 0.2% (1/430) in females. Compared with GBMSM not living with HIV, being GBMSM and taking PrEP was not associated with paying for sex (OR 1.4; 95% CI: 0.5-3.8). No GBMSM living with HIV reported paying for sex in the past three months. There was a significant association between paying for sex and gonorrhoea (OR 2.8; 95% CI: 1.0-7.7) in GBMSM but not HIV, syphilis or chlamydia. HIV/STI was not associated with paying for sex in heterosexual males.

Conclusions:

Paying for sex was more commonly reported among heterosexual males, followed by GBMSM. Females were very unlikely to pay for sex. There was a limited association between HIV/STI diagnosis and paying for sex in GBMSM.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

None to declare